



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 13 2017

OFFICE OF
ADMINISTRATION
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MANAGEMENT

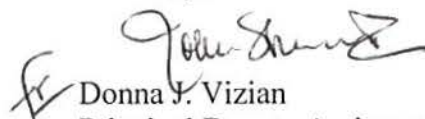
Ms. Beth F. Cobert
Acting Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Ms. Cobert:

On behalf of the EPA Administrator, I am pleased to submit the enclosed agency's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2017-2021). This Plan serves as a road map to guide our efforts in sustaining the EPA as a leader in creating and maintaining a high-performing workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion and empowers all employees to achieve their full potential. The multi-year Plan builds on the *EPA's 2012 – 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* and reflects guidance provided by the OPM.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda R. Gray, director, EPA's Office of Human Resources, at (202) 564-4606 or gray.linda@epa.gov.

Sincerely,


Donna J. Vizian
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator



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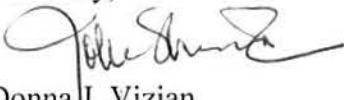
Mr. Andrew Mayock
Acting Deputy Director for Management
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Mayock:

On behalf of the EPA Administrator, I am pleased to submit the enclosed agency's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2017-2021). This Plan serves as a road map to guide our efforts in sustaining the EPA as a leader in creating and maintaining a high-performing workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion and empowers all employees to achieve their full potential. The multi-year Plan builds on the *EPA's 2012 – 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* and reflects guidance provided by the OPM.

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Sincerely,


for Donna J. Vizian
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2017 – 2021)
December 2016



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Introduction

Background

As one of the nation's largest employers, the federal government has an obligation to lead by example. On August 18, 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13583 – *Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce*. The EO directs executive departments and agencies to develop and implement a more comprehensive, integrated and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion as a key component of their human resources strategies. Agency approaches are to include a continuing effort to identify and adopt best practices, implemented in an integrated manner, to promote diversity and remove barriers to equal employment opportunity, consistent with merit system principles and applicable law. Further, the head of each executive department and agency is required to develop and submit to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and Office of Management and Budget an agency-specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Purpose and Scope

This Plan serves as a road map to guide our efforts in sustaining the EPA as a leader in creating and maintaining a high-performing workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion and empowers all employees to achieve their full potential. The multi-year Plan builds on the EPA's *2012 – 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* and reflects guidance provided by the OPM.

The EPA's Plan incorporates the three goals and eight priorities delineated in OPM's *2016 Government-wide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan*, and sets forth the approaches and actions for advancing diversity and inclusion at the EPA. The Plan addresses human capital functions including the development and implementation of recruitment, professional development, and engagement strategies critical to maintaining a more diverse workforce. Furthermore, it focuses on factors important to creating and sustaining an inclusive culture that encourages and enables individuals to participate to their full potential. The Plan also serves to communicate that diversity and inclusion are agency values and reflect a key management strategy.

The Plan will be reviewed annually to assess our progress and incorporate revisions as necessary. Progress in achieving desired organizational outcomes will be evaluated through the monitoring of identified systems of measurement and metrics. On a five-year cycle, we will initiate a full update of the *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* that will include, as applicable, revising and/or establishing new goals, priorities, strategies or actions.

Definitions

In order to ensure that all agencies are operating with the same frame of reference, the OPM provided definitions for the following terms:

Workforce Diversity – is defined as a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively.

Inclusion – is defined as a set of behaviors (culture) that encourages employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging.

Inclusive Diversity – is defined as a set of behaviors that promote collaboration amongst a diverse group.

Mission

The mission of the EPA is to protect public health and the environment. One of the EPA's cross-cutting strategies is *Embracing EPA as a High Performing Organization*. To support this priority, the EPA must recruit, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce and maintain a work environment where the uniqueness of individuals is respected and leveraged so that all employees are able to participate and contribute to the mission.

Vision

It is the EPA's vision to serve as a model federal agency by leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion to deliver the best public service. We strive to demonstrate diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the agency's management practices.

Strategic Goals and Measures

The EPA's diversity and inclusion efforts are guided by the following goals that emphasize workforce diversity, workforce inclusiveness and accountability:

- 1. Diversify the Federal Workforce through Active Engagement of Leadership**
The EPA shall foster a diverse, high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society, in conformance with merit principles.
- 2. Include and Engage Everyone in the Workplace**
The EPA shall foster a culture that encourage employees to feel uniquely valued and experience a sense of belonging.
- 3. Optimize Inclusive Diversity Efforts Using Data-Driven Approaches**
The EPA shall continue to improve inclusive diversity communication efforts and comply in a timely fashion with Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program requirements.

Goals, Actions and Measures

Goal 1: Diversify the Federal Workforce through Active Engagement of Leadership

Agency leaders shall continue their efforts to attract, recruit, retain, and cultivate diverse leaders by frequently communicating, accounting for, and modeling inclusive diversity behaviors that attract and reflect the broad diversity of American society.

Priority 1.1: Leaders shall emphasize the importance of their inclusive diversity efforts by utilizing a wide range of communication strategies and tools that demonstrate their support for these initiatives. Specifically, leaders shall provide resources and support to identify and overcome potential barriers that inhibit inclusive diversity efforts.

Actions:

1. The EPA Administrator will issue an annual message reaffirming the agency leadership's commitment to diversity, inclusion and inclusive diversity efforts.
2. EPA leaders will ensure the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy to reinforce the agency's diversity and inclusion principles and provide information concerning inclusive diversity efforts throughout the agency.
 - Ensure that all EPA managers and employees have access to the agency's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* as well as diversity and inclusion resources and training materials.
 - Expand efforts to educate and share information with the workforce concerning EEO, diversity and inclusion issues, including details regarding specific strategies and initiatives that the EPA is pursuing.
 - Utilize all available communication vehicles, including social media platforms and the EPA.gov website, to provide potential applicants with information concerning diversity and inclusion at the EPA.
 - Administer a robust orientation process for new employees and new members of the Senior Executive Service to introduce them to the agency's mission, values and culture.
3. EPA leaders and senior managers will sponsor, participate and encourage employees to participate in town hall meetings, brown bag sessions and events organized to promote inclusive diversity.
4. The EPA's Office of Civil Rights and Office of Administration and Resources Management will conduct customer service visits with program office and region senior management and encourage them to develop diversity and inclusion action plans.
5. Share best practices with program office and regional senior management in developing diversity and inclusion action plans. For example, the EPA will include Special Emphasis

Program Managers in the workgroup development of diversity and inclusion action plans.

Measures:

- ❖ The EPA Administrator issues an annual inclusive diversity policy statement to the agency's workforce.
- ❖ The EPA will develop a strategic communication plan and disseminate information concerning the EPA's inclusive diversity efforts.
- ❖ The EPA's quarterly Diversity Dashboard report is made accessible to all employees along with guidance on how to interpret the data in the report.
- ❖ The EPA's Office of Human Resources website provides current information and resources concerning agency diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- ❖ Diversity and inclusion events are scheduled, promoted and held throughout the year.

Priority 1.2: Leaders shall review the wide range of policies, programs, systems, and techniques currently in use and determine specific initiatives that should be enhanced and improved. The evaluation should include diversity, inclusion, and engagement elements in performance plans; employee resource groups; mentoring and coaching; and inclusive diversity training.

Actions:

1. The EPA will re-invigorate the agency's Special Emphasis Program to include encouraging employees to volunteer to fill SEPM positions.
2. The EPA's senior leaders will conduct regular informational sessions with employees to share information on training and career development opportunities and resources.
3. The EPA's senior leaders will encourage and support SEPM and Employee Resources Group initiatives to facilitate training on diversity and inclusion topics.
4. The EPA's senior leaders will use the results of the annual Employee Viewpoint Surveys and other workforce feedback to take action responsive to employee concerns.
5. The EPA's senior leaders will ensure that all SES members, managers and supervisors continue to have a performance plan measure addressing diversity and inclusion.
6. The EPA's OCR and OARM will develop a mechanism to voluntarily collect demographic information on participants in the agency's mentoring and coaching programs and use the information to address any potential barriers to participation caused by an agency policy, practice or procedure.

Measures:

- ❖ SEPM vacancies are filled timely and all SEPMs are provided appropriate training and support.
- ❖ The EPA develops an inclusive diversity SharePoint website, accessible to all employees, to host diversity and inclusion resources.
- ❖ Plans are in place to increase the percentage of positive responses to the EVS question concerning agency policies and programs to promote diversity in the workplace.

Priority 1.3: Leaders shall develop and implement broad outreach strategies to attract leaders from diverse sources to the organization, consistent with merit system principles, through strategic partnerships with affinity organizations, diverse postsecondary educational institutions, professional associations, and public, private and non-profit sectors.

Actions:

1. The EPA will coordinate outreach and recruitment strategies to maximize its broad-based efforts, including its ability to recruit from a diverse, broad spectrum of potential applicants, including a variety of geographic regions, academic sources and professional disciplines.
2. The EPA's recruitment calendar will reflect the various events recruiters and other personnel will participate in to share information concerning agency career opportunities.
3. The EPA will maintain and further establish strategic partnerships with various colleges, universities, other academic institutions and professional organizations.
4. The EPA's Minority Servicing Institutions program will ensure collaborative relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and American Indian and Alaska Native-Serving Institutions.
5. The EPA's human resources personnel and hiring managers will continue to collaborate concerning outreach, recruiting and hiring initiatives.
6. The EPA's OARM will ensure that hiring managers receive training on the use of appropriate hiring authorities and flexibilities.
7. The EPA's OARM and OCR will monitor national applicant flow and workforce demographic data against the National and Relevant Civilian Labor Force participation

rates, and as applicable, implement strategies to address the lower than anticipated participation rates identified as appropriate.

8. The EPA will review participation in leadership development programs and develop strategies to eliminate any barriers to participation.

Measures:

- ❖ The EPA maintains an online recruitment activities calendar that includes points of contact for upcoming events.
- ❖ SEPMs and Employee Resource Groups schedule presentations by guest speakers from local universities and professional organizations.
- ❖ EPA MSI coordinators receive training and a “toolkit” of resources to assist them to reinforce the agency’s diversity and inclusion efforts.
- ❖ The EPA’s OARM will measure the use of Schedule A and Veteran Special Appointing Authorities to appoint new employees.
- ❖ The EPA will utilize Management Directive - 715 reporting to monitor workforce demographics.

Goal 2: Include and Engage Everyone in the Workplace

The EPA shall intensify efforts to foster cultures that encourage employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging, engagement, and connection to the mission of the agency.

Priority 2.1: Foster a culture of inclusion and engagement by employing culture change strategies such as the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) Initiative and Diversity and Inclusion Dialogues. Provide training and education on cultural competency, implicit bias awareness, and inclusion learning for all employees.

Actions:

1. The EPA will provide inclusive diversity training as part of the agency’s comprehensive training program.
2. The EPA will apply OPM guidance concerning the New IQ initiative and solicit information from other agencies that have established New IQ techniques and training programs.

3. The EPA's leaders will sponsor, participate in and encourage employees to attend cultural awareness and heritage observances events, and support, as appropriate, employee efforts to invite guest speakers and host activities.
4. Each EPA program office and region will identify a diversity and inclusion lead who will serve as a point of contact for information on inclusive diversity initiatives.
5. The EPA's leaders will use annual EVS results and other workforce feedback to implement actions to enhance employee engagement and inclusion.

Measures:

- ❖ The EPA develops and deploys a New IQ training program.
- ❖ The EPA provides training on cultural competency, implicit and/or unconscious bias awareness, diversity and inclusion for all employees.
- ❖ The EPA evaluates organizations with an increase in the percentage of positive responses to the EVS questions comprising the Employee Engagement Index and New IQ Index, and changes in the overall index scores to identify best practices and lessons learned.

Priority 2.2: Assess, redesign, and reengineer organizational structures and business processes to promote teamwork, collaboration, cross-functional operations, and transparency; and to deconstruct organizational silos that lead to exclusive cultures and to flawed decision-making.

Actions:

1. The EPA will incorporate inclusive diversity principles across all business functions and promote efforts to enhance leadership and team building skills important to leading and/or participating on diverse teams.
2. The EPA will educate and train senior executives, managers, supervisors and HR professionals concerning the importance of promoting workforce diversity and inclusion, including legal requirements pertinent to recruitment, interviewing and hiring decisions.
3. The EPA's leaders and managers will use the EPA Talent Hub to promote and solicit competitive service employees to apply for temporary full-time detail assignments, part-time projects/special assignments, temporary promotions, SES rotations and other developmental assignments.
4. EPA's leaders will implement the agency's Position Management Order (Order 3145) that requires managers to align the position management program with human capital planning activities and reporting, performance evaluation and the budget process.
5. The EPA's leaders will use annual EVS results and other workforce feedback to implement actions responsive to organizational practices and/or other areas of concern.

Measures:

- ❖ Measure the use and traffic to the Talent Hub website.
- ❖ Survey employee satisfaction of employees who have participated in an assignment posted on the EPA Talent Hub.
- ❖ The EPA evaluates organizations with an increase in the percentage of positive responses to the EVS questions concerning management efforts to promote communication among different work units, support collaboration across work units, provide employees opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills and support employee development to identify best practices and lessons learned.

Goal 3: Optimize Inclusive Diversity Efforts Using Data-Driven Approaches

The EPA shall intensify efforts to create and foster a diverse, high-performing workforce, utilizing data-driven approaches and optimizing policies, processes, and programs to drive inclusive diversity efforts and accomplish the agency's mission.

Priority 3.1: Create a diverse, high-performing workforce, utilizing data-driven approaches to recruitment, including analyzing applicant flow data; educating hiring managers; designing fair and effective recruitment and examining strategies for competitive examining and examining for the career Senior Executive Service that cast the broadest net possible and apply merit principles; utilizing applicable special hiring authorities (e.g., Schedule A authority for individuals with certain disabilities, veterans hiring authorities, etc.) as supplements to competitive hiring processes; partnering with diverse organizations and institutions to help recruitment draw from all segments of society, and generate cognitive diversity; and conducting a review of potential implicit biases within the organization.

Actions:

1. The EPA will review applicant flow data for SES and selected non-SES positions to identify potential barriers to equal employment opportunity, and as applicable, refine outreach and recruitment strategies to encourage submission of applications from all qualified segments of society, consistent with merit system principles.
2. The EPA will complete implementation of its multi-phased pilot to collect voluntary self-disclosed sexual orientation and gender identity data from employees and job applicants. These data will be used to help design effective outreach and recruitment strategies that will encourage submission of applications from all qualified segments of society, consistent with merit system principles.
3. The EPA's hiring managers (including recruiters) will be provided with current information on all relevant appointing authorities and hiring flexibilities.

4. The EPA will retain resumes for Schedule A applicants and disabled veterans in an automated and searchable database that will allow hiring managers to have access to qualified applicants in a timely and efficient manner.
5. The EPA will disseminate information to hiring managers regarding active internship programs and opportunities.
6. The EPA will collect and analyze information on internal applicants to SES vacancies consistent with the reporting requirements of MD-715.

Measures:

- ❖ The EPA develops and implements an agency-wide coordinated plan to participate in career fairs and other outreach events.
- ❖ Measure the number and percentage of new employees hired under special hiring authorities.

Priority 3.2: Foster a diverse, high-performing workforce by utilizing data-driven approaches to promotion opportunities and career development, including analyzing applicant flow data; developing career enhancement opportunities; utilizing appropriate collaborative practices and social media technologies; and collaborating with SEPMs, affinity groups and employee resource groups.

Actions:

1. The EPA will utilize the MD-715 reports including analysis of SOGI data, and applicant flow data and establish focus groups to identify actions that can be taken to address any potential barriers to career development and advancement identified by the agency.
2. The EPA's leaders will communicate the importance of employees upgrading their skills, improving their visibility and demonstrating leadership abilities as keys to advancing their career.
3. The EPA will evaluate the data from the Management Hiring Satisfaction Survey to determine whether there are any procedural barriers associated with EPA's outreach efforts and/or vacancy announcements.
4. The EPA's leaders will use annual EVS results and other feedback to address workforce concerns regarding opportunities for employee training, development and advancement.

Measures:

- ❖ Implementation of appropriate actions, including focus group suggestions, which address issues hindering career development and advancement.

- ❖ Revision of position descriptions for occupations where lower than anticipated application, qualification and selection rates are identified.
- ❖ The EPA evaluates organizations with an increase in the percentage of positive responses to the EVS questions concerning career development and advancement to identify best practices and lessons learned.

Priority 3.3: Collect relevant performance data to establish a business case for diversity and inclusion for the agency; collaborate with other agencies and the Diversity and Inclusion in Government Council to create models for analyzing performance metrics in correlation with diversity and inclusion metrics.

Actions:

1. The EPA will revise the Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard to incorporate SOGI data and will continue to employ the Dashboard as a tool to support agency workforce planning and reporting.
2. The EPA will provide periodic reminders for employees to voluntarily verify the accuracy of their demographic information in the agency's employee self-service information system, Employee Express, including their voluntarily self-disclosed SOGI once captured in the system.
3. The EPA's leaders will use annual EVS results and other workforce feedback to implement actions responsive to areas of concern.
4. The EPA will develop and enhance relationships with diversity and inclusion officers from other agencies.
5. The EPA will evaluate and implement changes, as appropriate, to enhance the effectiveness of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council.
6. The EPA's leaders will participate in the DIAC's work group meetings.

Measures:

- ❖ The EPA evaluates organizations with an increase in the percentage of positive responses to the EVS questions comprising the New IQ index and change in the overall New IQ index score to identify best practices and lessons learned.
- ❖ Implementation of inclusive diversity best practices identified through coordination with other agencies and recommendations from the DIAC.

Implementation Plan

Leadership Commitment: The EPA's leadership will play a key role in defining, championing and communicating the agency's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*, and in annually monitoring the implementation of actions required to achieve the goals of the Plan.

- The Chief Human Capital Officer is responsible for implementing the goals of this Plan in collaboration with program offices and regions.
- The EPA's Executive Management Council, which is comprised of senior career leaders, will provide critical guidance on specific action plans and measures that will implement the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- The EPA's Human Resources Council and DIAC, comprised of representatives from a cross-section of the agency, with representatives from program and regional offices as well as SEPMs and the unions, will act as a strong platform of engagement for developing and recommending actions and initiatives that support diversity and inclusion as a means of conducting business, and for evaluating their effectiveness by identifying appropriate metrics to measure outcomes.
- The EPA's senior leaders and managers will ensure that inclusive diversity practices are integrated into communications, recruitment and retention, training and professional development and overall management practices.
- This Plan, consisting of goals, required activities, and best practices will be communicated throughout the agency by senior leaders.
- All EPA employees will improve their understanding of how a diverse and inclusive work environment can strengthen and enrich their ability to achieve the agency's mission.

Accountability: Measurement and accountability are essential components of this Plan, and will provide a way to track progress, identify achievements, and inform strategic decisions related to diversity and inclusion.

- The EPA will ensure senior leaders are responsible for implementing the goals and priorities of this Plan by linking them to their individual performance plans.
- The EPA will use the OPM Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard as the reporting mechanism to submit progress reports, as required, to OPM.
- To achieve the long-term goals and associated actions outlined in this Plan, the EPA will also track activities, outcomes and accomplishments through internal performance measures. These measures will take advantage of established information systems, surveys and reporting mechanisms, including the EPA's

Diversity Dashboard, OPM's Diversity Dashboard and the EVS, MD-715 and other measurement indices as determined over time.

- Within the five-year period covered by this Plan, the EPA's DIAC will review the Plan contents with appropriate parties to evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies and supporting actions.

Conclusion

The EPA's *2017-2021 Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan* provides a framework of goals, required activities, and best practices that support the agency remaining an "employer of choice." The achievement of the goals and priorities in this Plan requires the strong support and collaboration of the EPA's leaders, managers, supervisors and staffs. The EPA's employees should be informed of the agency's ongoing efforts to create an inclusive and diverse workplace, and leadership's recognition that each employee plays a critical role in the success of the agency's mission and vision.